



LAUNCH

out into  
the deep

# OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Reflections on the Masses of Lent, Passiontide,  
and the Easter Octave

By

Monks of Conception Abbey

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## INTRODUCTION

It has been said that the three things most dear to all religious people are prayer, meditation and song. With these three, men feel they have done all they can to lift heart and mind to God. And this *is* religion.

So it is by no means an accident that almost all religious gatherings among Christians occupy themselves with precisely these very elements. And one of the most honored and most beautiful of all religious gatherings is the Divine Office, the official prayer of the Catholic Church. This is recited daily by all our priests and religious the world over. The Office is, basically, nothing more than prayer, meditation and song. The pattern is there, simple and consistent.

But the pattern can be found elsewhere as well. Our usual evening devotions, our novena services, our holy hours and our rosary service—all these are patterned invariably along familiar lines. Wherever Christians gather for divine worship, they find themselves following much the same sort of plan: prayer, meditation and song.

The pages before you offer another such attempt at creating this three-fold Christian atmosphere. It is an attempt at encouraging the beautiful custom of family devotions. We suggest a kind of little evening service for the home, a Lenten service for one and all to join in.

Our booklet is divided into two sections. Part One begins with an opening prayer, Psalm 94, with its so-called invitatory, or overture-invocation. This is followed by a hymn. Three hymns are included: one for Lent, another for Passiontide, a third for Easter Week. Part Two, the

larger part, compiles all the various readings for each day of Lent and the Paschal octave. Here is the daily "meditation period" of the family liturgy. The father or mother may read it before all, in this way instructing them in the Mass texts for the next morning. Thus the Lenten meditation prepares for the Lenten Mass. The family liturgy leads to the parish liturgy. Immediately after each day's reading, the prayer for the day is recited. The reader prays, and all answer *Amen*.

Need it be added that, as fully as is possible, the family should try to be represented each morning at the parish Mass? Attendance at the Holy Sacrifice is the most perfect Lenten practice we can propose for ourselves. It is the Mass, above all, that renews the mortification of Christ, the Lent of Christ. At God's altar we die with Christ and rise with Him as well. All other Lenten gestures that we may plan for the family are good (and this present booklet offers one more such devotion for the holy season); but the perfect Lent is the Eucharistic Lent, in which we eat every day at the Lord's sacred table and thus grow in "our new life in Christ."

A word about the stational churches. You will find in the middle of this booklet a map of Rome. On it are pointed out all the ancient churches of the Holy City. In the sixth and seventh centuries, processions were made to these centers of worship. The pope, his clergy and the faithful wended their way through the streets to assemble at one or other of these "stational" churches, where the Lenten Mass was solemnly celebrated. Our Missals still indicate the day by day locale of those ancient gatherings. But there is more than mere historic interest involved here. It will be noticed that quite often, for instance, it is the saint honored at a particular stational church that determines the selection of Scripture passages to be read on that day. This will become clearer to us as we study the Missal during the forty days of preparation before us.

## PART ONE

### A Family Liturgy or Devotion

The family gathers together in the evening at some convenient time. One of the family begins the prayer.

**Leader:** O God, come to my assistance,

**All:** O Lord, make haste to help me. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be; world without end. Amen.

#### Invitatory

(During Lent)

L. Be it not vain for you to rise up early, before the light; for the Lord hath promised a crown to them that watch.

A. Be it not vain for you to rise up early, before the light; for the Lord hath promised a crown to them that watch.

(During Passiontide)

Today, if you hear the voice of the Lord; harden not your hearts.

(On Easter and its Octave)

The Lord has truly risen; Alleluia.

#### PSALM 94

L. Come, sing unto our Lord and Master,  
acclaim the Rock of our salvation:  
Stand forth before the Lord to praise Him,  
raise canticles of jubilation.

A. (*The entirety of the invitatory used above.*)

L. High soars above all gods His greatness,  
above the gods all vain of woods and fountains.  
In His hand lie the world's most distant boundaries,  
and far below His eye the highest mountains:

A. (*Second half of invitatory used above.*)



- L. To Him belongs the ocean, for He made it,  
to Him the land, the work of His creation.  
Come, let us fall down before Him,  
with tears before the Lord who us created:  
He is our Lord and God and Master,  
we are His people, flock by His hand enumerated.
- A. (*Entire invitatory.*)
- L. O that today you would listen to His message:  
"Harden not your hearts as in Meriba,  
as at Massa, in the desert hour,  
Where Me your fathers tempted,  
demanded signs, though they had seen My power."
- A. (*Second half of invitatory.*)
- L. Through forty years that race was My heart's loathing,  
of them I said: Their hearts ne'er cease to wander.  
Since they refused to know My pathways,  
I spoke an oath in indignation:  
They shall not go into My rest there yonder.
- A. (*Entire invitatory.*)
- L. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy  
Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever  
shall be, world without end. Amen.
- A. (*Second half of invitatory.*)
- L. (*First half of invitatory.*)
- A. (*Second half of invitatory.*)

## Hymn\*

(During Lent)

\* Music for these hymns is given in ALTAR ECHOES, published  
by Conception Abbey Press. 30c each.

### 1

With happy mother from the crowd,  
We sing in joyous mood:  
O blessed womb that gave Thee birth,  
And breasts that gave Thee food.



O blessed womb that gave Thee birth,  
And breasts that gave Thee food.

2

More blessed still, we hear Thee say,  
Who listen to God's word;  
Thrice blessed they who faithful keep,  
The message they have heard.  
Thrice blessed they who faithful keep,  
The message they have heard.

3

To God the Father glory be,  
And to His only Son,  
Be glory to the Paraclete,  
While endless ages run.  
Be glory to the Paraclete,  
While endless ages run.

(During Passiontide)

1

Of that branch in ancient garden,  
Did Thy Father make Thy Tree;  
On that Tree with Thee uplifted,  
Let us triumph, Lord, with Thee.  
On that Tree with Thee uplifted,  
Let us triumph, Lord, with Thee.

2

By Thy words on road to Passion,  
Words that set Thy children free,  
Thou the Vine and we the branches,  
Let us triumph, Lord, with Thee.  
Thou the Vine and we the branches,  
Let us triumph, Lord, with Thee.

3

To Thy Father be all glory,  
Equal glory, Lord, to Thee,  
By the Spirit's equal glory,  
Let us triumph, Lord, with Thee.  
By the Spirit's equal glory,  
Let us triumph, Lord, with Thee.

(On Easter and its Octave)

1

Bursting forth from Pharaoh's prison,  
Alleluia let us sing,  
Alleluia, Christ is risen,  
Alleluia to our King.  
Alleluia, Christ is risen,  
Alleluia to our King.

2

World-wide table, Heaven's vision,  
Let the Alleluia ring,  
Alleluia, Christ is risen,  
Alleluia to our King.  
Alleluia, Christ is risen,  
Alleluia to our King.

3

To the Father, Son and Spirit,  
Alleluia on the wing,  
Alleluia, Christ is risen,  
Alleluia to our King.  
Alleluia, Christ is risen,  
Alleluia to our King.

After the hymn, the leader reads the reflection or reading for the day. In conclusion, he adds the prayer.

## PART TWO

### Ash Wednesday

(Station at St. Sabina)

"Rend your hearts, not your garments."

"NOT BY BREAD alone does man live..." Today begins the solemn fast of the Holy Forty Days. This custom began with Moses and the prophets and was made sacred by Christ Himself. This is the time when Christians guard their lives with more than ordinary care and wash away the faults and sins of other days. This is done fittingly when they keep from all their bad habits and give themselves to prayer with tears, to real sorrow of heart, and to the work of abstinence. Therefore, in these days, let us increase our measure of service, let us pray more, and let us give up something of food and drink. Let each offer more than usual, willingly, in the joy of the Holy Spirit. That is, let him withdraw from his body somewhat of food and drink, sleep, talking, silliness, and with the joy of spiritual desire let him await holy Easter.

In ancient times, those who had committed grave sins that gave scandal did public penance for them. They were called penitents. They began their time of penance by coming to church in sackcloth and receiving ashes on their heads. Later on, the Church blessed these ashes (made from the palms of the year before) and sprinkled them on the heads of all her children. At this ceremony, we resolve to live in the spirit of penance during this Lent.

"... but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God." Lent is the great retreat of the Church. What is denied to the body is given to the soul. Lent is a real feast for the spirit that loves God and the things of God. No other time of the year is so rich in the word of God. The Mass of each day has a special proper. Each Mass closes with a *Prayer over the People* which is a gem of earnest pleading, in addition to being a good instruc-

tion on the penance we are doing. If we stress bodily penance alone, if we focus our attention only on what we seem to be losing, we are in danger of losing the battle before it is fairly begun. Penance is not just for the sake of suffering. It is to clear away material things in order to make way for the spiritual. We live in the spirit during these days. We attend to the things of the soul. Following the Church more closely than usual, we even go in spirit to Rome each day to assist at Mass in the station church chosen since early times as the meeting place for the day. There we visit, as it were, with some saint who did just what we are doing. These saints lived with great earnestness, for they knew what might be just ahead for them, the fight for which their penance could be called preliminary training, the endurance of martyrdom. Beside their sufferings (and our Lord's), what we offer looks very small. But these saints also give us a practical idea of how to live with and for God until the time of trial comes. Each day, then, at this or that church in Rome, let us tarry awhile with these older brothers and sisters in the faith who fought the good fight, finished their course, and are now at home forever, able and happy to help us if we but ask. Let us, like them, develop our gift of wisdom, by enjoying the richness of God's gifts of word and example during this holy time.

**Prayer:** *Grant to Thy faithful, O Lord, that they begin the season of fasting with fitting piety and persevere in its observance with unfaltering devotion. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Be mindful of whose head and  
body thou art a member—St. Leo

## Thursday after Ash Wednesday

(Station at St. George)

"O Lord, I am not worthy, but only say the word."

**ST. GEORGE** was a Christian soldier, martyred in the persecution of Diocletian. His head is preserved under the high altar of the stational church of today. He is one of the patron saints of the British Empire. His cross, along with the x-shaped one of St. Andrew, is in the British flag.

Because St. George was a warrior, the story of the Roman centurion was selected for today's Gospel. In this Gospel-story, the Roman centurion asks Jesus to come down and heal his servant. Pleased with the humility of the centurion's prayer, Jesus granted what he asked. We need to be cured. Our sins, or the remains of our sins, are sicknesses of the soul. Christ is the Physician. We must ask Him to cure our ills.

Strangely enough, this soldier, St. George, shows us one powerful means of cure. One of the weapons in our spiritual armory, according to St. Paul, is the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Elsewhere we are told that the word of God is both light and healing medicine; light to show the way ahead, medicine to heal what bruises we may have received in our fight with evil. Lent is, above all, the time rich with the word of God.

Offering Mass daily, at least in spirit, let us keep its teaching like Mary, pondering it in our heart. Let us live the Mass throughout the day. Let us keep our soul healthy and we will find ourselves becoming steadily better.

**Prayer:** *O God, who art offended by sin but pleased by the repentance of the sinner, look kindly upon the earnest prayers of Thy people and do not strike us in anger, as our sinfulness would deserve. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## Friday after Ash Wednesday

(Station at the Church of SS. John and Paul)

"Pour forth upon us the Spirit of Thy love."

**T**HE CHURCH in which the Pope used to say Mass on this day was the house of the Christian senator, Pammachius, who spent all his money in doing good to the poor and needy.

On Ash Wednesday, the liturgy stressed the first of the great works of Lent, penance. Yesterday, we learned of the second great work, that of prayer. Today, the Church follows with lessons on the third of these works, namely, almsgiving, or charity to others.

The Lesson and the Gospel both teach Christian charity. Though it is the custom just to give money in order to relieve distress, the full practice of Christian charity is far broader than that. Christian charity consists in all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, works to be done with hand and heart and tongue. Moreover, Christian charity demands that we serve our neighbor not just to satisfy *our* love of him, but to satisfy Christ's love of him. This may mean great sacrifice on our part sometimes; but when it does, we must think of the sacrifice Christ made for us and we will not shrink from repaying through others the debt we owe Him.

It is necessary that we see Christ Himself in our neighbor, for, in His clear picture of the last judgment, He makes Himself one with every needy person. In that de-

scription, Christ mentions neither our penance nor our prayers. Not that they are without value, but He means to stress that without charity they do not count. In this story of the judgment, Christ does not tell us that *someone* was hungry or cold or homeless, but that *HE* was. When asked how He was found so needy, His answer is, "Whatsoever you did to the least of these, you did to Me." Let us therefore do all our kindnesses to Him, and they will have a double blessing.

He that gives but a slender mite,  
But gives to that which is out of sight,  
That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty  
Which runs through us all and doth all unite,  
The hand cannot hold the whole of his alms,  
The heart outstretches its eager palms,  
For God goes with it and makes it store  
To the soul that was starving in darkness before.

**Prayer:** *Having begun our fasting, Lord, we beg Thee to support our efforts, so that our bodily penances may be proof of our sincere love of Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Saturday after Ash Wednesday**

(Station at St. Tryphon)

"Be of good heart, it is I."

**L**ENT IS A SACRED springtime. Catechumens and sinners and saints, the whole of the Mystical Body on earth is preparing to receive new life at Easter. Hence we must die to self. Like the grain of wheat which at this time is being cast into the ground to die, we too must die to bring forth fruit. And the fruit which this dying to selfishness will bring forth in us is a new life in Christ. "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Dying to self is not easy. It can be very hard. We have a picture of what it can be in the Gospel of today,



wherein we see the apostles struggling against the wind and the waves. But when Christ came to them walking on the waters and entered their boat, the storm stopped. Then the apostles could easily manage the boat and make it go ahead.

Without Christ, all our trying will not succeed. When Christ helps us, things are easy. Therefore, during Lent, we must offer Mass and receive Communion often. The catechism tells us that one of the effects of Holy Communion is to weaken the hold of our bad habits upon us, and to help us get rid of them.

**Prayer:** *O Lord, listen graciously to our prayers: grant that we may faithfully and wholeheartedly serve Thee by our fasting and thus grow in health of soul and body. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **First Sunday of Lent**

(Station at St. John Lateran)

"He has given His angels charge over thee."

**T**ODAY'S GOSPEL contains an important lesson for us.

There is no freedom from temptation in this life. There are some who imagine that temptations cannot hurt them. They put themselves in occasions of sin constantly. Such people are foolish. Then there are others who are faint-hearted and weak in the face of temptation. They give in to the devil: anything to avoid trouble.

But Christ stands as our model in the time of temptation. He recognized that He had to face it. Nor was He faint-hearted and weak under temptation. He faced the devil squarely, resisted him, and finally won over him.

If you find it hard to overcome temptation, you must ask Christ to help you. He conquered the devil once; He will do it again through you, if you will only let him. Anyway, learn to see in temptation the finger of God,

inviting you on to the mountain with Christ. Come and do battle on Christ's side against the powers of darkness.

Note, too, the weapon that Christ uses against our enemy, the devil. First, He refuses to work a miracle to satisfy His hunger, with the words, "Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Then the devil, also quoting from the psalms, tries to get Him to make a public show of Himself to attract attention. Jesus again uses the sword of the spirit, the word of God, to beat back that suggestion. Finally, on the devil's third impious attempt, our Lord comes back once more with the word of God, almost the same words as the first commandment. That settled the fight for good.

If we are wise, we will follow the teachings of the Church closely, storing up in our minds and hearts such words, full of the power and the spirit of God, and have them ready to use against any temptation that comes to us. Let us lose none of these precious words. Like the boy Samuel, let us come to church these days saying, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

**Prayer:** *O God, every year Thou dost purify Thy Church by means of the forty days' fast. Grant Thy people the good sense to invest in good works all the riches they win from Thee by their self-denial. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Monday of the First Week of Lent**

(Station at St. Peter's Chains)

"Come ye blessed of My Father."

**T**ODAY'S MASS was to teach the catechumens the reason or purpose of life. They were getting ready for their baptism at Easter. We are already baptized, but it will always do us good to review these lessons for our souls.

It is good to remind ourselves what the purpose of life on earth really is, and the best way of reaching that goal.

To know the purpose of life is a great consolation for us. In the Lesson, the Lord gives us a beautiful picture of it in these words: "I Myself will seek out My sheep, and I will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the dark and cloudy day. I will feed My sheep in most fruitful pastures and I will cause them to lie down to rest." This promise of happiness and rest at the end of life consoled and drew the catechumens, as it does us. On the other hand, the judging and cursing of the wicked made them fear.

To know the sure way of reaching this happy end is also a great comfort. In the Gospel, our Lord, who will be our Judge, tells us that He will judge us according to the charity or lack of charity which we have shown Him. Christ takes as done to Himself, to His humanity, whatever we do to other men, for He claims all men as His unless they die in sin. Those who have done the spiritual and corporal works of mercy will be saved. Those who have not shall go into everlasting punishment.

"Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

**Prayer:** *Touch our hearts, God our Savior, and guide us with heavenly teachings, so that the forty days of fasting may be profitable to us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **Tuesday of the First Week**

(Station at St. Anastasia)

"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge."

**I**N TODAY'S GOSPEL, our Lord drives from the temple those who misbehaved. This Gospel was probably chosen because outside of the church of St. Anastasia there was a large and noisy marketplace.

We must always remember that in church we are in the immediate presence of the divine Majesty and of His angels and saints. We are standing or kneeling or sitting in the courts of heaven itself. We must remind ourselves of this. We must renew our faith in these wonderful heavenly friends all around us, who are as yet invisible to our eyes. We must never do anything, or permit others to do anything, unbecoming to their presence in church.

Today, St. Anastasia, meaning "new light," will remind us that we are, as our Lord called us, children of light. So all we do should be done in the full light of our Father's presence, the light of His approving smile.

We know too that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. God lives within us. So we must never misuse, or allow others to misuse, our bodily members and powers.

"My house shall be called the house of prayer."

**Prayer:** *Look upon Thy people, O Lord, and grant that the punishing of our bodies may make our souls glow with longing for Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Ember Wednesday in Lent**

(Station at St. Mary Major)

"I will meditate on Thy commandments."

**T**ODAY, THOSE PREPARING for baptism are taught how they must act if they wish to belong to Christ. They must obey the will of His heavenly Father. Christ Himself said that He came not to do His own will but the will of the One who sent Him. He expects the same of all who follow Him.

In the first Lesson, we are told that Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai, to get the tables of stone: the Law

and the Commandments. In the second Lesson, we learn that Elias fasted forty days on his way to Mount Sinai. The catechumens, too, had to fast in preparation for their baptism. This teaches us that fasting makes us ready to know and to do God's will. Our Lord also fasted forty days in the desert. In keeping our Lenten fast for forty days, we are following a custom dear to the faithful doers of the will of God in both Old and New Testament times.

**Prayer:** *Graciously listen to our begging, O Lord, and stretch out Thy right hand to protect us from everything that would harm us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Thursday of the First Week**

(Station at St. Lawrence in Panisperna)

"Keep me, O Lord, as the apple of Thy eye."

**Y**ESTERDAY, THE TEACHING was especially for those who were preparing for baptism. Today, it is for those who are doing public penance in preparation for the pardon they are to receive on Holy Thursday. We find this pattern of teaching on Wednesdays and Thursdays all during Lent. We can profit much by both sets of instructions. All our Christian life is a growing in the graces we received at baptism. Also we need to do penance for sin, which keeps us from living our Christian life to the full.

Today's Gospel about healing the Canaanite woman holds a lesson for sinners. Christ says: "I am not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." The house of Israel in the New Testament is the Church. The sheep that are lost are the sinners. God sent Christ to bring back sinners that are lost.

O Hound of heaven, running to find the lost sheep! Wonderful mercy of God that loves us in spite of our sins. God sent His own beloved Son to bring us back from the wilderness of sin, to make us His own once more. Is not this thought enough to win the most hardened heart?

**Prayer:** *We ask Thee, O Lord, to look with kindly eyes upon the loving devotion of Thy people, and to grant that all who discipline their bodies with fasting may be strengthened in spirit by the fruits of this good work. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Ember Friday in Lent

(Station at the Twelve Holy Apostles)

"Thou art made whole, sin no more."

**T**ODAY'S GOSPEL tells how Jesus cured the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. This man stands for any one of us. The world is the hall mentioned in the Gospel. The sick are those who have not received the healing gifts of redemption. The pool is the Church's baptismal font. The Savior calls one out of the crowd and heals him. That is the mystery of God's free giving to His creatures. He chose me from among many to receive health and divine life.

God's usual way of giving His gifts is through His Church. Be thankful for the great mercy of having been chosen to be a member of Christ in His Church, and for all the gifts God has so generously given to you. Strive to grow constantly more deserving of the goodness of God.

**Prayer:** *O Lord, be gracious toward Thy people; make them grow in devotedness to Thee and, in Thy mercy, strengthen them by Thy support. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## Ember Saturday

(Station at St. Peter)

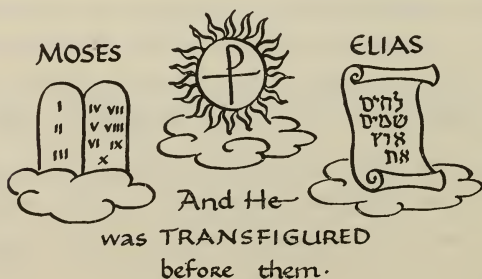
"Let my prayer come in before Thee."

**WE** CAN scarcely realize what Ember Saturday meant to the early Christians. They gathered at the tomb of St. Peter on Saturday evening. They spent the whole night in prayer, reading and singing. During this night some young men received the various orders that prepared them for the priesthood. Others were made priests.

In the ancient Church, today's celebration was devoted to the whole great family of Christian people which was to be firmly rooted in its calling.

St. Peter, at whose tomb the Mass is celebrated, stands among us. We share with him the joys of the Transfiguration and say with him: "It is good for us to be here." St. Peter prays for us so that, after Lent is over, we can celebrate a glorious Easter, both here and hereafter. Holy Orders are still conferred on this day in some places. So we should pray for good priests.

**Prayer:** *We beg Thee, O Lord, to look with pity on Thy people; in Thy infinite kindness, do not permit the rod of Thy anger to touch them. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*





## Second Sunday of Lent

(Station at St. Mary in Dominica)

"This is the will of God, your sanctification."

**I**N TODAY'S GOSPEL, Christ's divine nature shines out through His human nature with dazzling splendor. Christ is God, the Son of the eternal Father, in whom the Father is "well pleased."

After God created man, He gave man sanctifying grace, which is a share in His own nature. Through Adam's sin, man lost that marvelous gift. Jesus came to restore it. Jesus, by sharing our human nature, shares that gift of divine life with us. This mystery is beautifully shown by the ceremony of the mingling of water and wine in the chalice at the Offertory of the Mass. To share the divine life with Jesus, we must be members of Him, a part of Him, like the water that mingles with the wine. Then we live by His life. We are like branches grafted onto the Vine, Christ. Let us stay closely united with Him; let us be like Him, so that the Father can say of us, also, that He is "well pleased."

The sight of Christ in glory today is a foreshadowing of the glory that will be ours when we die and rise again. This is an Easter glory. We die with Christ in baptism and we begin to live with Him now. But only after our resurrection will our glory with Christ really appear. We can increase that glory by our acts of virtue now. Let us always look forward and pray: "Thy kingdom come!"

**Prayer:** *O God, Thou seest that we are entirely without strength; watch over us, therefore, so that our bodies may escape harm and our souls may be cleansed of all evil thoughts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Monday of the Second Week

(Station at St. Clement)

"May this Communion cleanse us from guilt."

**I**T IS IMPORTANT for those to be baptized to know in whom they are placing their trust. Therefore, today's Gospel points out strong arguments to prove that Christ is God.

Christ told His hearers, "You are of this world; I am not of this world." His hearers asked Him, "Who art thou?" Jesus said, "The beginning, who also speak to you." And finally Jesus foretold His own death, saying, "When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then you shall know that I am He." But the Jews did not understand that Jesus called God His Father.

We must realize that Jesus is God, and we must trust absolutely in Him. The Son of God put on human flesh in order to be near to man and to help him. Trust and love Jesus, and let Him lead you to the Father.

**Prayer:** *We ask Thee, almighty God, to enable us, while we afflict our bodies, also to abstain from sin and strive for virtue. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Tuesday of the Second Week

(Station at St. Balbina)

"One is your master, Christ."

**T**ODAY'S MASS was composed neither for the catechumens nor for the penitents. It came into use when grown-up people were no longer in large classes getting ready for baptism. So it is for the faithful of the Church who come to learn how to be made perfect.

"For one is your master, Christ." These words bring home to us in a brief sentence that we are members of the

family of God. God the Father is the Head of this family. We are His children. For us, this must be a real joy. Lent is to deepen this knowledge that God is our Father. So we must rely upon His fatherly kindness and care.

Christ is our elder Brother, our Teacher and Master. This is why we are called Christians. We are other Christs. Do we realize this always? We should try day by day to learn more about Christ, to be one of His outstanding pupils. The *I* must not live, but the *Christ in me*. Let us keep all His commandments because of our love for Him.

**Prayer:** *We beg Thee, O Lord, to grant us Thy help in keeping the fast, so that we may faithfully complete what we have undertaken under the inspiration of Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Wednesday of the Second Week

(Station at St. Cecilia)

"Can you drink the cup that I shall drink?"

**T**HE MASS of today, again, is for the catechumens. Let us listen, and learn to grow in our baptismal graces. Nor are the penitents forgotten. The idea of suffering is strong, perhaps in remembrance of St. Cecilia's death.

All know the story of St. Cecilia. She converted two brothers, Valerian, who was her husband, and Tiburtius. This is why the Church uses the Gospel-story of the two sons of Zebedee. She does not dwell on the ambition of the mother. Rather she remembers that these two brothers did drink of the chalice by following Jesus to their death. The two brothers, led by Cecilia to Christ, also drank of the chalice of suffering by being martyred.

The *Prayer over the People* gives us in brief the life of this glorious virgin. It is also an outline of the Christian ideal. "O God, the restorer and lover of innocence,

direct the hearts of Thy servants to Thyself; that, fervent in spirit, they may be found both steadfast in faith and zealous in good works."

**Prayer:** *Look with favor upon Thy people, O Lord. Thou didst command us to abstain from food; now give us the grace also to restrain all our evil inclinations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Thursday of the Second Week

(Station at St. Mary across the Tiber)

"He that eats My flesh abides in Me and I in him."

**T**HURSDAY is the day in Lent on which the idea of penance is emphasized. On Holy Thursday the public penitents will be given their pardon and taken back into the fold of the Church. In former days the penitents had to leave the church after the Gospel, and could not remain for the Eucharistic feast. How they longed for this food of their souls and begged for the crumbs like the Lazarus of the Gospel-story. They felt keenly their separation from the family of the Church. But they were not yet worthy to share in the joy of offering together with the faithful, nor of the grace of union with Christ and with one another at Communion.

Let us say the *Confiteor* for our own sins and for those of other members of Christ's Mystical Body, to have taken from our souls anything that might spoil the beautiful unity of the whole Church, the whole Christ.

Very often, the neighborhood of the stational church had something to do with what was read or prayed at the Mass. Today's stational church is close to the former Jewish quarter of old Rome. Hence the Gospel treats of the rich man, who represents the Jews. Lazarus covered with sores is a figure of the sinner whose soul is covered with sins. Lazarus begs for crumbs, as a soul that has left its God

by sin begs for peace and happiness. Though we may not know it, and perhaps would not own up to it, all our trying to be happy is a longing for God. And there is nothing a fallen soul hungers for more than the crumbs of that Bread, the Eucharist.

**Prayer:** *We pray Thee, O Lord, grant us the help of Thy grace so that, by devoting ourselves with fitting zeal to fasting and prayer, we may be delivered from all enemies of body and soul. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Friday of the Second Week

(Station at St. Vitalis)

"May this Sacrifice remain in us in action."

**T**HREE IMPORTANT thoughts are impressed upon us today.

First, the stationary saint, St. Vitalis, by his martyrdom, is a reflection of the divine martyr, Christ. In the apse of his church is a picture of the crucifixion of Christ.

The second thought is taken from the Old Testament. We are told the story of Joseph, sold into Egypt by his own brothers. God used this wicked deed for good: Joseph became the savior of his people. This is a clear picture of what is going to happen to Christ. He, the beloved Son of the heavenly Father, will take human nature and become a brother of men. He will be mistreated, hated, sold for thirty pieces of silver, and killed; and thus will He save His people.

Both the Lesson and the Gospel tell us, not openly, but in a veiled way, of Christ's approaching death. Our Lord tells the Jews a story in which He shows the violence He will suffer in His Passion. At the end of His story, He asks the Jews what should be the punishment of the wicked men of whom He had been telling. By their condemning those men, they pass sentence on themselves.

Are we with Christ or against Him? Our works will tell. So most of the prayers of this Mass, as of many others during this time, ask for the grace to do the good works that we should. Let us say them fervently.

**Prayer:** *Grant, we pray Thee, almighty God, that, being cleansed by holy fasting, we may celebrate the coming feast with pure hearts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Saturday of the Second Week

(Station at the Church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter)

"Father, I have sinned."

**T**HE EPISTLE of today tells the story of Esau and Jacob. Here, we see how God chose as first-born one who by rights was not first-born. To the Jews and to the Romans of the early Church, the position of first-born in a family was most important. The first-born was the head of the family, or of a clan of families among the noble and high of the land. What a deep impression this story must have made upon the catechumens. They were pagans; yet God passed up the Jews and chose them to be His people. Certainly they were grateful. We who have the gift of faith, are we grateful for our great privilege?

Yet another grace has been ours, the grace of conversion. Perhaps we have acted like prodigal sons after having received the gift of faith. We were not satisfied. We left the land of our birth, the fold of the Church. We spent our inheritance. We sinned. We went into the foreign country of things not good for our souls. But God in His kindness gave us the grace to be sorry, to come back home to the house of our Father, to beg for pardon.

The offering, today, is a sealing and strengthening of these two great graces: our being chosen as God's children, and our conversion, or turning back to God. The Communion



ion-banquet is a feast of joy at our belonging to the Church, to Christ, and at our turning towards the ways of penance.

**Prayer:** *We ask Thee, O Lord, to give our fasting a wholesome effect, so that the discipline of our bodies may bring new life to our souls. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



### Third Sunday of Lent

(Station at St. Lawrence outside the Walls)

"Walk then as children of light."

**T**HE CLASS for baptism was intrusted to St. Lawrence on Septuagesima Sunday. Now, on the day of their first examination, they are brought to a church of St. Lawrence.

Today's Mass shows us Christ in open warfare with Satan, who, we must not forget, is a real person. He was one of the highest, most beautiful angels of heaven before his fall. Satan is far more intelligent than man, and thus he brought about Adam's fall. Satan held man a prisoner in the bonds of sin and death until Christ came to free man.

When Satan, as a strong man armed, kept the court of this world, the works of men were the works of darkness mentioned in the Lesson. They were works, which the Apostle says, should not so much as be named by us, as children of light. Such works bring the anger of God upon the world, and upon any soul that does them.



But Christ, the infinitely stronger One, came and took away the power of Satan and all the armor in which he trusted, and the weapons he wanted to use against us. He left upon the earth His wonderful kingdom of peace, the Church. He left us the right and the power to do the works of God Himself. We who, before baptism, were children of darkness, are now the children of light. Let us, therefore, walk in the light and do the works of light.

Today, again, we hear about the word of God, and that from the lips of the Son of God Himself, who is the Word of the Father. When the woman of the crowd, hearing His words of wisdom about the strong One, called out in praise of the mother who had borne and nursed Him, Jesus answered her by calling attention not so much to Mary's mothering Him, but to the faithfulness with which she kept the Father's word. Let us hope He can say the same of us, Mary's adopted children.

**Prayer:** *We beseech Thee, almighty God, to listen to our humble prayers and stretch out Thy right hand in our defense. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Monday of the Third Week

(Station at St. Mark)

"O God, I have declared to Thee my life."

**N**AAMAN, GENERAL of the army in Syria, was a leper. From a little Jewish slave girl, he learned that the prophet Eliseus could heal lepers. So he came to him to be cured. He expected to be received as a powerful lord and to be waited on personally by the great prophet. But when he came, Eliseus simply told him to go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan river. Naaman was proud and became angry at this order. Only after his men reasoned with him, did he follow the advice of God's prophet. He was cured.

A Christian must be humble. At baptism, we must submit to the will of Christ, and after that we must follow Him constantly. Christ himself was baptized in the same Jordan river by John who was, in his day, the known prophet of God. By humbly submitting to this public baptism, which was to show the start of a life of penance, Jesus made the waters of the Jordan, and all waters, holy. Now all who are baptized are made clean and given a new life.

Yet, in these days of the New Law, there are many who do not follow the teachings of Christ. They are like Naaman, who in his pride did not want to follow the directions of the prophet Eliseus. We must listen to the words of Christ and live conscious of our baptism. Also, let us be like the good advisors of Naaman and talk others into listening to Christ and following Him.

**Prayer:** *Kindly pour Thy grace into our hearts, O Lord, so that, while we abstain from food for the body, we may keep our senses from harmful indulgence. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **Tuesday of the Third Week**

(Station at St. Pudentiana)

"Lord, who shall live in Thy tabernacle?"

**T**HE MASS today does not stress the idea of baptism and penance so much as the blessing of belonging to a community or brotherhood. Maybe this is because the first Christian community met at the home of St. Pudentiana. Their pastor, St. Peter, could tell them as no one else could, the very words of Christ which he had heard so often and cherished so faithfully in his memory and heart. Where two or more are gathered together, Christ is in the midst of them. That must have been a consoling sentence for the Apostle, longing for his Master. It must also be so to us. When we are at prayer in the church, then, above all, Christ

is among us, not only in the Blessed Sacrament, but as Head of His Mystical Body. We should realize how important such prayer is, for it is Christ using our voices, our lips and tongues, to praise His heavenly Father.

So that we may be better, and pray more worthily, our Lord urges us to correct each other. He wants us to get rid of our faults and become more perfect. When we are angry at another, we often tell him his faults. That may only hurt him, or even make him worse. Let us not correct in anger, but kindly show our friend that he would be better and dearer to us if he gave up certain bad habits or avoided certain sins and faults.

Also we must have the spirit of mercy. If we wish God to pardon us, then we must be ready to pardon others "seventy times seven times," which means always.

**Prayer:** *Almighty, merciful God, hear our prayers and kindly grant us the grace to practice wholesome self-denial. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Wednesday of the Third Week

(Station at St. Sixtus)

"Thou shalt fill me with the joy of Thy countenance."

**T**HIS WAS an important day in the early Church, for today the catechumens were given the Ten Commandments. It is fitting that they should be brought to St. Sixtus, for he was the dearly loved spiritual father of St. Lawrence, and the one to whom this faithful deacon would most surely have led them for instruction.

The Commandments follow the deep, hidden laws of nature known to all men through the small voice of conscience. But the goodness of God made them known early to the human race in their own speech, by giving them to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

The first three Commandments refer to God, the Leader of the Christian army. The first Commandment calls for loyalty to Him; the second, for reverence; and the third, for service.

The other seven Commandments refer to others and to ourselves. The fourth is a special Commandment to be grateful to all who take care of us and do good to us, beginning with our parents. The fifth Commandment bids us respect our neighbor's person and life. The sixth tells us to respect his family. The seventh commands us to respect his property.

The last three Commandments forbid us to misuse our heads, our hands, and our hearts. We misuse our heads when we tell lies. We misuse our hands when we allow them to stray toward our neighbor's things. We misuse our hearts when we allow them to love something that is forbidden.

We should accept these Commandments as the catechumens did and make them our constant rule of life. If we do, we shall be faithful, reverent, loyal, obedient, kind, pure, honest, truthful, and contented with our own property and our own family. Such a person is dear both to God and to man.

**Prayer:** *We beg Thee, O Lord, to grant that, having learned discipline through fasting, we may keep our hearts free from evil desires and thus more easily obtain Thy mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## Thursday of the Third Week

(Station at the Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian)

"Thou fillest every living creature with blessing."

**T**ODAY IS mid-Lent. We are encouraged in the healing work of penance by gathering at the station church of two saints who have always been held in memory as doctors. So the Gospel today tells of Jesus, the divine Physician, curing a sick person.

Our soul is made sick by the bite of the snake, Satan. Christ, the divine Healer, came to cure our soul and to save it. First, He had to show that He could heal, so He began by curing sick bodies. This was simply to show what He could do to sick souls.

After Christ went back to the Father, He left means whereby sick souls could be cured and gave the Church special charge of them. Whether by baptism or by the sacrament of penance in confession, healing is still carried on for all who are sick in soul. Then the souls are fed and strengthened with the divine food of the Eucharist.

How good a God we have, truly dwelling with us in this place. May we always do the works He commands, so that He may be pleased to dwell with us forever.

**Prayer:** *May our remembering of Sts. Cosmas and Damian today give glory to Thee, Lord, since we thereby acknowledge Thy goodness in making them saints who would be helpers to us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Friday of the Third Week

(Station at St. Lawrence in Lucina)

"There shall be in him a fountain of living water."

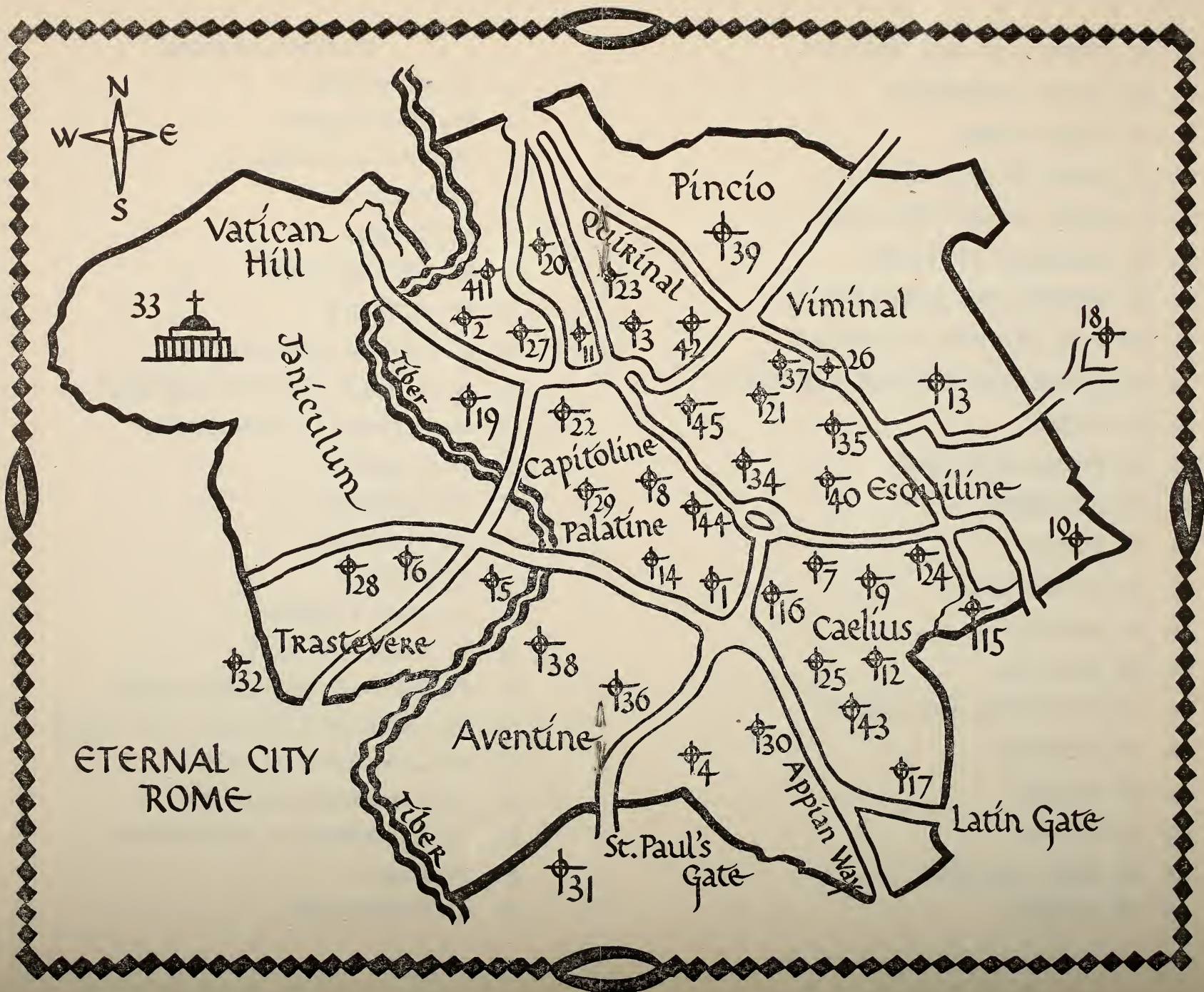
**J**UST THE FACT that the station church is that of St. Lawrence tells us that the Mass today is for the catechu-

## STATIONAL CHURCHES

1. ST. ANASTASIA
2. ST. APOLLINARIS
3. TWELVE APOSTLES
4. ST. BALBINA
5. ST. CECILIA
6. ST. CHRYSOGONUS
7. ST. CLEMENT
8. SS. COSMAS AND DAMIAN
9. FOUR HOLY CROWNED MARTYRS
10. HOLY CROSS IN JERUSALEM
11. ST. CYRIACUS
12. ST. STEPHEN
13. ST. EUSEBIUS
14. ST. GEORGE
15. ST. JOHN LATERAN
16. SS. JOHN AND PAUL
17. ST. JOHN AT THE LATIN GATE
18. ST. LAWRENCE OUTSIDE THE WALLS
19. ST. LAWRENCE IN DAMASO
20. ST. LAWRENCE IN LUCINA
21. ST. LAWRENCE IN PANISPERNA
22. ST. MARK
23. ST. MARCELLUS







24. SS. PETER AND MARCELLINUS
25. ST. MARY IN DOMINICA
26. ST. MARY MAJOR
27. ST. MARY OF THE MARTYRS
28. ST. MARY ACROSS THE TIBER
29. ST. NICHOLAS IN CHAINS
30. SS. NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS
31. ST. PAUL OUTSIDE THE WALLS
32. ST. PANCRATIUS OUTSIDE THE WALLS
33. ST. PETER
34. ST. PETER IN CHAINS
35. ST. PRAXEDES
36. ST. PRISCA
37. ST. PUDENTIANA
38. ST. SABINA
39. ST. SUSANNA
40. SS. SYLVESTER AND MARTIN
41. ST. TRYPHON
42. ST. VITALIS
43. ST. SIXTUS
44. ST. MARY THE NEW
45. ST. AGATHA

mens. We are about to learn something more concerning the great gift of grace.

Ever since the spirit of God moved over the waters at the very dawn of the creation, water has been a special thing. Today's Mass has two wonderful scenes of water, both favorites of the early Christians. They painted these pictures on the walls of the underground churches (which were called catacombs). These two pictures not only showed the wonders of baptism, but also of the life of grace.

The hungry, thirsty people of the Lesson, shown begging for food and drink, are our souls. We should be longing for the refreshing sacrament of the Eucharist which, especially during Lent, is to give us courage and strength to carry on our battle.

Jesus at the well shows us what a kind Lord we have waiting for us. He is eager to give us the living water of His grace. If we will come to Him at the word of others, as the Samaritan people did when the woman talked to them of Jesus, He will come and live with us, as He did in their town. He will fill us with the grace of His presence. "He that will drink of the water that I shall give him shall not thirst forever."

*Prayer: We beg Thee, Lord, to look with loving favor on our fasting, so that we may resist evil with our minds, just as we are abstaining from food for our bodies. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Saturday of the Third Week**

(Station at St. Susanna)

"I will fear no evils."

**T**ODAY'S LITURGY is so rich in instruction that one finds a difficulty in choosing the best way of studying it. It is a Mass of three wonderful women: a white-clad virgin is the

saint of the stational church; a faithful wife is the blue-clad woman of the Lesson; while a sorrowing sinner is the purple-clad figure in the Gospel. Whether innocent, faithful, or sorry, we have an example for our conduct.

Again, this Mass is a classic example of a double picture. One woman is accused of adultery but not guilty. The other woman is accused and guilty, but is set free and made whole by our Lord.

In the two stories we find three groups or kinds of people: first, a woman taken in adultery; second, wicked judges who looked outwardly as though they were carrying out the law; and lastly, in each story, a savior.

The climax, of course, is the word of our Lord, saying, "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more."

For all sinners this scene is a great comfort. I, too, will be pardoned by Christ. He will not hold a grudge against me, but He will be ready to pardon me if I am sorry and make up my mind not to sin any more. Who could do otherwise before such a kind Judge?

**Prayer:** *Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that, as we are fasting from food, we may also keep ourselves from sin and strive for growth in virtue. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*







# REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS

## Laetare Sunday

(Station at Holy Cross in Jerusalem)

"I rejoiced at the things that were said to me."

**T**HIS SUNDAY marks the half-way point in our climb up the hill towards the summit whereon we shall see our Savior offer His great sacrifice, and from which we shall see arise the Sun of Easter day. The shadows in which we have been climbing lift a little. A ray of light and joy is allowed to shine through. The organ, that has been silent, is heard during Mass. Mother Church greets us at the entrance to the sacrifice-banquet with the words: "Rejoice, rejoice with joy, you that have been in sorrow."

Jesus tells the apostles to command the people to sit down, and the Evangelist tells us, "Now there was much grass in that place." The green of springtime is seen. For the catechumens, this is the sacred springtime, when they are to be spiritually born in the font, and fed with the Bread of Life, mystically shown in the Gospel-story today.

There is a flower to which the eyes of the faithful turn today. It is a golden rose, blessed by the Holy Father and sent to a good, Catholic ruler. This custom comes from the practice the Romans had of blessing the first roses of spring. The blush of the rose is reflected in the rose-colored vestment the priest wears today in place of the violet color, which has carried the theme of shadow throughout these Lenten days.

Let us open our hearts wide to take in this holy joy.

It will fit us for the rest of the time of waiting for the joys of Easter.

**Prayer:** *We ask Thee, almighty God, to grant us, who are being punished for our misdeeds, the refreshing consolation of Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Monday of the Fourth Week

(Station at the Four Holy Crowned Martyrs)

"The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up."

**R**OSE SUNDAY is the high point of the image of Lent as spring. From this viewpoint, even the class preparing for baptism was looked upon as a new growth of the Church. From now on, the Passion and the Resurrection will have more of our attention in the liturgy. The Church, the extension of Christ, has to suffer much in order to rise with Christ. Each member of the Church, as another Christ, must expect the same.

There will be sufferings, but we can always look past them to the resurrection which is sure to come. The perishable temple of our body must suffer in order that the spiritual temple may rise.

To make our bodies the temple of the Lord, we must drive out the spirit of the world, the "money changers." We want our bodies to be the temple of the Father, when we shall rise on the great day. When the body lags in the work of penance, we must encourage ourselves with the thought that it will share in the glory of the risen Christ. It will glow and thrill with the beauty of its own glorified soul. The early Christians thought often on this truth and lived by it. This future happiness of the body made their sufferings seem like nothing. As we walk now in Lent with our mind fixed on the Easter

joys, so let us walk in life with our minds and hearts on the true joys of the eternal Easter of heaven.

**Prayer:** *Grant, we beg Thee, almighty God, that we may please Thee with body and soul through this annual observance of the holy season of fasting. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **Tuesday of the Fourth Week**

(Station at St. Lawrence in Damaso)

"Arise, O Lord, bring help to us."

**T**ODAY WE SEE the beginning of that bitter struggle between Jesus and the Jews, which led, in the end, to His death. Both readings in the Mass are on the Jews' resisting God.

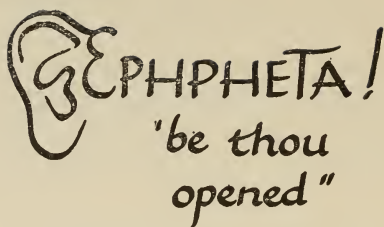
In the Lesson, God threatened to destroy the Jews because they did not keep His word, but set up false gods and worshipped them while Moses was with Him on the mountain. Moses begged God to remember His promises which He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God remembered and spared the Jews for Moses' sake, and because of his prayers.

In the Gospel-story, Jesus tells the Jews that His teaching is not His own, but comes from God. He shows them that His teaching is like that of Moses, but they refuse to listen and believe Him. So they do not hear God, who sent Jesus.

What monstrous pride it is to refuse to listen to God! God speaks to us in the Bible and through the sermons of His priests and appointed teachers. Do we love holy reading and listen eagerly to it? Do we read the Bible, and do we listen to sermons when we can?

**Prayer:** *May the keeping of this holy season of fasting, we ask Thee, Lord, help us to advance in holy living and bring us the unfailing assistance of Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*





### Wednesday of the Fourth Week

(Station at St. Paul outside the Walls)

*"I will pour upon you clean water."*

**T**HE MOST important examination of the catechumens took place today. First, they had to pass their test. Then, an acolyte called out the names of those privileged to be ready for baptism. A priest placed some blessed salt in their mouths. Salt is a symbol of the gift of wisdom, by which we have a taste for and relish of the things of God. Then they went to stand at the door of the church. Meanwhile, the choir chanted the Introit, "When I shall be sanctified in you . . . I shall pour upon you clean water and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness."

After the bishop had said a prayer for them, the catechumens returned and knelt down. The sponsors were called to come and sign the catechumens with the sign of the Cross, and the acolytes placed their hands upon them. This ceremony was repeated three times.

Just before the Gospel, four deacons came from the sacristy bearing four Gospel books and took their places at the four corners of the altar. The bishop explained the purpose of the Gospels. Then the deacon intoned the first words of the Gospel of St. Matthew and the bishop explained them. The same was done for the other three Gospels. The explanation by the bishop was followed by the ceremony of "ephpheta," that is, opening of the ears. A deacon then chanted the Gospel telling of the blind man's

cure. The blind man stands for those not baptized. The Creed was then sung in Greek and Latin, and explained; and the Our Father was sung and explained to the catechumens.

How much do we know about our holy religion? These early Christians were training to be martyrs. Are we not their spiritual children? Are not these holy truths, which they thought precious enough to die for, wonderful enough for us to live for?

**Prayer:** *O God, Thou dost give fitting reward to the just and forgiveness to sinners on account of their fasting. Do Thou, then, have pity on us who cry to Thee in humility, and grant us remission of our sins in view of our contrite confession of guilt. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Thursday of the Fourth Week

(Station at the Church of SS. Sylvester and Martin)

"Thou hast taught me, O God, from my youth."

**T**WO WEEKS from today, those doing public penance will be absolved, and once more take their place among the members of the Church at the Holy Sacrifice and the Communion table. So today's Mass refers to sinners. The readings tell of two resurrections. The prophet pleaded long with God for the life of a child. But Christ raised the son of the widow by just His command, "Young man, I say to thee, arise."

When one sins, one destroys the divine life in one's soul. God alone can restore that life, because it is a share of His life. So we must go to God through Christ for the raising to divine life of a soul dead in sin.

**Prayer:** *We beg of Thee, almighty God, let us find joy in the discipline of fasting; grant that the suppression of earthly desires will make it easier for us to grasp heavenly truths. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Friday of the Fourth Week

(Station at St. Eusebius)

"Let us also go that we may die with Him."

**T**ODAY, WE HAVE again two resurrection stories. They show what is about to happen to the catechumens at their baptism, to the public sinners in their pardon, and to all sinners who get back the lost grace they long for.

The raising of Lazarus was a story most dear to the early Christians. It is one of the chief miracles that proved Christ's claim to be God. At the same time, this story shows how truly human Christ was. It shows how dearly He loved Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. "And Jesus wept." This is perhaps the shortest and most telling sentence in the Bible. How gentle and loving our Savior is! We need not fear Him. Let us repay His love with our love. Then we too shall rise from our sins and faults through the power of our divine friend, Jesus.

Jesus alone, because He was God, could raise a man from the dead. But to show us that He left the power of raising dead souls to life with the priests of His Church, Jesus did something memorable at Lazarus' grave. He raised Lazarus, but he left it to the apostles standing by to untie him from the winding bands that still held him. We also come to God to be raised from our sins, and again it is Christ's minister, the priest, who looses us and lets us go free and in peace. To our thanksgiving after the sacrament of penance, we should always add a prayer for the priest who has done us this greatest of all kindnesses.

*Prayer: O God, Thou dost renew the world by means of wonderful sacraments. Grant, then, we ask Thee, that Thy Church may thrive on these infinite gifts and yet not lack temporal assistance. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Saturday of the Fourth Week

(Station at St. Nicholas in Prison)

"You that thirst, come to the waters."

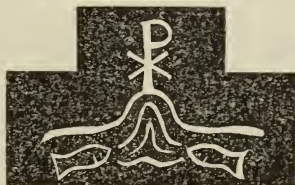
**B**EFORE THE EIGHTH century, this station was kept at the church of St. Lawrence in Lucina. So there are many allusions to light in today's Mass. Likewise, because the procession had to pass along the Tiber on the way to the stational church, we find many allusions to water.

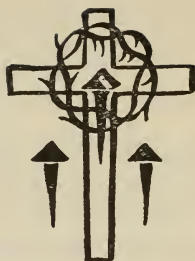
Both of these ideas were happily blended in the Mass, for today was one of the examination days for the class preparing for baptism. The Mass begins with an invitation to the candidates for baptism, "All you that thirst come to the waters, saith the Lord."

The Lesson and the Gospel drive home the truth that Jesus is the light of the world. After Adam's fall, the fire of divine life was extinguished in the souls of men, and the powers of darkness claimed the world for their own. Then Jesus, Light of light, came down from the realm of light and love into the night of this world. "I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?"

In His light, let us live.

**Prayer:** *We pray Thee, Lord, make our spirit of sacrifice produce fruit; for unless Thou art pleased with our fasting, it will profit us nothing. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*





## Passion Sunday

(Station at St. Peter)

"A High Priest of the good things to come."

**S**T. LEO TEACHES us that the Easter mysteries hold the first place among all Christian celebrations. Our whole life, the reforming of our ways constantly, should prepare us to keep this season in a fitting manner. But these present days, which are so close to the most sublime sacrament of divine mercy, should find us more devoted than ever.

During these next two weeks, the whole attention of the Church is on the redeeming death of her Divine Head. There are many signs of sorrow. The crosses which the early Christians decked with jewels so their pagan fellow-men would not think the victorious Christ just a criminal, were covered until Easter morning. So we also cover our crosses and statues. This ceremony calls to mind Christ's hiding from his enemies lest they kill him before the time and in a manner different from that of the divine plan. It is today that we see the bitter anger of the Jews flame out against the innocent Christ. By trying once again to show them that He was God, Jesus so enraged them that they took up stones to cast at Him. And Jesus, who was their God and Maker, hid from these, His creatures, and left their temple.

**Prayer:** *We beseech Thee, almighty God, look down graciously upon this family of Thine. Then, through Thy infinite generosity, the bodily life of*

*each of us will enjoy safe guidance, and our spiritual life will prosper under Thy protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Monday in Passion Week**

(Station at St. Chrysogonus)

*"He is the King of Glory."*

**W**ITH EACH WEEK of Lent, the fasting and penance becomes harder for our bodies. So the story of the Ninevites is read to us for our encouragement. The people of Nineveh heeded the warning of the prophet Jonas, and did penance.

"God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil ways; and the Lord our God had mercy on His people." So will He have mercy on us, if we remain faithful in the way of penance which we have followed in this Lent.

The Gospel is full of promise for the catechumens, thirsting for the grace of baptism. Likewise is it full of comfort for us. We have the source of grace, the Spirit of whom Jesus spoke, living within us ever since our baptism. By our penance during this Lent, we are making sure that no sin, no affection for any sin or fault, will hinder the action of the Holy Spirit within us. Then grace, like an ever-flowing fountain amid flowers, will act in our souls, refreshing us, quenching our thirst for divine things, putting out the flames of wrong desires, and giving life and growth to solid fruits of goodness.

**Prayer:** *Sanctify our fasting, we beg of Thee, Lord, and graciously grant us forgiveness of all our faults. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Tuesday of Passion Week**

(Station at St. Cyriacus)

*"Expect the Lord and do manfully."*

**T**ODAY THE Christians met at the church dedicated to the deacon Cyriacus. During his life, he often visited the



Christians who were imprisoned. These prison cells were in the place where the great public games were held. In these games, lions were used for the amusement of the on-lookers, who took a savage pleasure in watching them devour prisoners. A cell in which a prisoner was kept might have been a den for a lion some time before. Maybe this is the reason why the passage about Daniel in the lions' den was chosen for today's reading. A picture of Daniel with outstretched arms and a lion on either side of him was the early symbol for a cross.

The Gospel continues the theme of the hatred of the Jews for Jesus. This hatred has become so violent that He cannot walk openly among them for fear of being killed.

**Prayer:** *May our fasting be acceptable to Thee, Lord; grant that this atonement make us worthy of Thy grace and lead us to the springs of never-failing health. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Wednesday in Passion Week**

(Station at St. Marcellus)

"I give them life everlasting."

**T**ODAY, WE SEE Jesus walking on the porch of the Temple. The Jews ask Him to tell them plainly whether He is God. Jesus calls their attention to His miracles. (For who but God can work miracles?) They understand Him, and they are about to stone Him for blasphemy, because He, being a mere man (so they think), claimed to be God.

Do we not forget that this man, Christ, is God? Is not our devotion sometimes soft and sentimental? There are some who sing in sugary tones of the "Sweet Babe of Bethlehem" at Christmas and who prefer the "Three Hours" devotion to the liturgical service on Good Friday. We should check this seeking only for sweet feelings in prayer. Christ is God. He is the mighty and great and eternal



King, who is at the same time a strong and true friend. He has told us to pray to the Father through Him. Few of the official prayers of the Church are *to* Christ. Almost all are to the Father *through* Christ. So let us offer our prayers to our heavenly Father through Christ, and we shall never fall into the ways of sentimental piety.

**Prayer:** *O God, bless this season of fasting and mercifully enlighten the hearts of Thy faithful; in Thy goodness, hear the prayers of those to whom Thou dost grant holy zeal in Thy service. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Thursday in Passion Week

(Station at St. Apollinaris)

"She with tears has washed My feet."

**T**ODAY'S MASS, above all others, holds out hope for the penitent sinners. In the Lesson we have the prayer of Azarius pleading with God to forgive the Jews their sins and to re-establish them as a great nation. It is a prayer that can be used by any earnest soul seeking to become more pleasing to God. So much is it in the mind and spirit of the Church (which is Christ) that we find it a part of the offering prayers of every Mass. Right after the bread and wine for the sacrifice have been offered, we plead, with a contrite heart and humble spirit, that our own sacrifice may be so made in His sight as to please our God. That is a perfect morning offering, tying the whole day's life to the altar, to the Mass; making of life itself a Mass in union with Christ.

The Gospel-story tells us about Mary Magdalen's washing Christ's feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with costly perfume. How dearly Magdalen must have loved Christ and repented of her sins, to face the public and take whatever they might choose to think or say about her as she showed Him this mark of love.

The Lesson shows us how a sinner might well pray. The Gospel shows us the loving Master whom we have offended by our sins. All He asks of us is our love in return for His.

**Prayer:** *We beg Thee, almighty God, to grant that the dignity of human nature, impaired by self-indulgence, may be restored by faithfulness in the practice of self-denial. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Friday in Passion Week

(Station at St. Stephen on Mt. Coelius)

"Deliver and save me."

**L**AST FRIDAY, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The Jews, fearing the influence of this wondrous miracle upon the people, meet today to decide upon Christ's death (next Friday). How is it possible that the Jews, who were God's chosen people and who seemed to be so devoted to religion, could reject God's Son and put Him to death? Perhaps it would be well, before this Lent is over, to check on my own life and see if there is some secret fault that I will not admit even to myself. Such a fault will grow and spoil all my goodness, if I do not check it. Maybe it is some dislike, such as these leaders of the Jews had for Christ. Perhaps it is some jealousy, such as they felt about His popularity. Christ has told us not to come to the altar while any misunderstanding exists between ourselves and another. Christ takes as done to Himself what we do to others. A wall between ourself and another, deliberately set up and kept there, is a wall between our soul and God. The punishment that Jeremias foretold befell the Jews. Let us beware lest it also befall us. "They have forsaken the Lord, the vein of living waters."

Today is also the feast of the Seven Sorrows of our Blessed Mother. A week hence, at the foot of the Cross, the sword of sorrow will pierce her heart. "Good Mother,

fount of mercy, make me feel the force of sorrow, so that I may weep with thee."

**Prayer:** *Pour forth Thy grace into our hearts, O Lord, and help us curb our evil inclinations, for we prefer temporal chastisement to eternal punishment. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Saturday in Passion Week

(Station at St. John at the Latin Gate)

"The Son of Man must be lifted up."

**I**N ANCIENT times, the pope used to rest today in preparation for tomorrow's tiring celebration. So there was no Mass for today until recently.

The readings continue to tell of the satanic hatred of the Pharisees for Christ. They hated Christ for political reasons. He threatened to take the people from their leadership. How different their leadership from that of John the Baptist. The entire Jewish people held John as a great prophet; but as soon as Christ came, John turned over to Him all the attention he had gained.

God, in His divine providence, foreknew the hatred of the Jewish leaders. He sent His Son into the world to die for the redemption of mankind. By their hatred and plotting, the Jewish leaders were the instrument that brought about the redemption.

In the readings, we see, likewise, Jesus' complete calmness and mastery of the situation. He enters Jerusalem in triumph, teaches in the temple, meets the delegation of Greeks, foretells His death and warns His hearers. Only the God-man could so act.

**Prayer:** *We, Thy devoted servants, beg Thee, Lord, to help us grow in child-like obedience to Thy holy will, so that, taught by the liturgy, we may be enriched with ever higher gifts and thus become always more pleasing to Thy Majesty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



HOSANNA

TO THE SON OF DAVID

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**Second Passion Sunday**

or

**Palm Sunday**

(Station at St. John Lateran)

"O King of Israel, Hosanna in Excelsis!"

**T**ODAY WE enter the Great Week of the Church Year with a joyful sacramental procession honoring Christ our King. Acting as Christ's representative, the priest blesses our palm branches, employing prayer, holy water, and incense. Then Mother Church reads the Gospel-story of Christ's triumphant procession into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. Inspired by that reading, we too form a procession and accompany Christ's representative, our priest, with songs of joy, to the new Jerusalem, our parish church. As the joyful procession ends, the priest asks almighty God to bless and protect the homes in which these branches of palm will be preserved. Not only does our Palm Sunday procession look back to that one of two thousand years ago described in the Gospel; it also looks forward to that triumphant procession at the end of time when Christ and the redeemed will enter into the heavenly Jerusalem.

The joyful procession is followed by holy Mass, full of thoughts of the coming Passion. The Introit itself is a cry of distress. In the Epistle, St. Paul comes before us to remind us that Christ, our dear Savior, had to suffer in order to merit eternal glory; the Gospel-story of the Passion is a graphic picture of Christ's suffering. At the Consecra-

tion, this Passion of Christ is made present to us, and at the Communion of the Mass we are invited to partake of the Fruit of His Sacrifice, so as to become living branches of the Vine, Christ.

**Prayer:** *Almighty, eternal God, it was in obedience to Thy will that our Savior became man and suffered death on the Cross, thereby giving mankind an example of humility; kindly give us the grace, then, to imitate His willingness to endure pain and thereby earn a share in the glory of His resurrection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Monday in Holy Week

(Station at St. Praxedes)

"Mary took ointment—Judas was about to betray Him."

**ST. PRAEDES** PUT her house at the disposal of Pope St. Pius I, just as Martha and Mary had put their house at the disposal of Christ. This is the reason for the choice of the station church today.

The Gospel begins with the words, "Six days before the Pasch. . . ." It tells how Mary anointed Jesus with precious ointment, and Jesus took her part against Judas, who lamented over the "waste" of the costly perfume. The Savior saw through Judas' pretense of charity in wanting the ointment sold, and warned him of his evil end. Furthermore, He tries to convince His apostles that He is truly going to die, although they cannot believe it. And again we see the hatred of the Jews, who came to the supper not to see Jesus, but to see Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead. But most outstanding in the whole scene is the love of Jesus for these dear friends. He dines with them and accepts graciously their favors and friendship for these last few days of His life. Jesus' heart is human. He is so pleased by little acts of thoughtfulness and courtesy on our part. Let us be His friends eager to please

Him, either in His sacramental state, or in persons, or in small daily affairs whenever there is a chance of following His ways.

**Prayer:** *Grant, we ask Thee, almighty God, that we who fail in so many trials because of weakness may be refreshed through the merits of Thy only-begotten Son, who lives with Thee forever. Amen.*

## **Tuesday in Holy Week**

(Station at St. Prisca)

"I was as a meek lamb."

**S**UNDAY WE heard the Passion according to St. Matthew read during the Mass. Today we hear the Passion according to St. Mark. We see how Jesus by His Passion fulfilled what the prophet Jeremias foretold about Him six hundred years before. "And I was as a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim: and I knew that they devised counsels against me, saying, 'Let us put wood on his bread, and cut him off from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more.'"

St. Mark wrote down St. Peter's sermons and stories about Jesus. The *Prayer over the People* may well have been St. Peter's prayer after his talks, and we can make it ours for the help of God against our weakness. "May Thy mercy, O God, make us free from the weaknesses of our old nature and enable us to be formed anew unto holiness. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, living and reigning with Thee, the Father, and the Holy Spirit (within us) for ever and ever. Amen.

**Prayer:** *Almighty, eternal God, grant us the grace so to take part in the services commemorating the Passion of our Lord that we may obtain the favor of Thy pardon for our sins. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## Wednesday in Holy Week

(Station at St. Mary Major)

"The Lord became obedient unto death."

**T**HE PASSION of our dear Savior is fast coming near. It is the death that He so longed to suffer for our sakes that He called it a baptism for which He could scarcely wait. Such love! No wonder the catechumens look forward with eagerness to their baptism on the eve of Easter. And we remember ours, which cost Jesus His blood and His life, with all the gratitude our hearts can have.

Today's liturgy has vivid sketchings for us of this Passion. Both readings are from Isaias. In the first, he describes God as the powerful Defender who has trodden the winepress alone. In the second, he pictures the Savior as the "despised and most abject of men, a man of sorrows and one who knew weakness," who was "led as a sheep to the slaughter."

The Secret and Postcommunion ask God that He would grant us by the death of His Son, shown in these mysteries, eternal life. What a beautiful, meaningful prayer!

**Prayer:** *Almighty God, we who are constantly burdened with faults beg Thee to grant us salvation through the Passion of Thy only-begotten Son, who lives with Thee forever. Amen.*



## Thursday in Holy Week

(Station at St. John Lateran)

"I have given you an example, that so you do also."

**T**HE HOLY HOUR of Holy Week comes on Thursday evening. Just as Christ and His disciples gathered in the cenacle



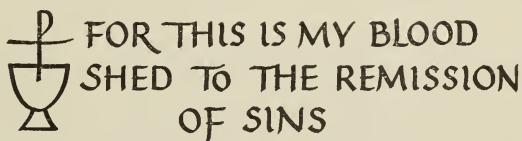
for the first Holy Hour of the world, so we, together with Christ's representative, our priest, gather in our parish church to keep Christ's Holy Hour, doing what He commanded: "Do this in remembrance of Me." At the very beginning of the Holy Hour of the Mass stands the Cross of Christ, "in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection." Our joy over the Sign of our salvation bursts forth in the joyful *Gloria* with the ringing of the bells, and the music of the organ, and our song. Then St. Paul very seriously reminds us in the Epistle that the Eucharist is not ordinary bread but is really and truly the Body of Christ; otherwise, why should a man "examine himself first..." and how would he be "eating and drinking damnation to himself... not recognizing the Lord's Body for what it is"? And the Gospel-story tells us how Christ washed the feet of His disciples and so prepared them for eating the Last Supper that they might "have companionship with" Him. Then, before our astonished gaze, Christ's representative, our priest, takes a towel and a bowl and washes the feet of twelve men of our parochial family, perhaps even our own feet; and so the Gospel-story comes alive. 'Where there is love and kindness, there God is fain to dwell.'

On that first Holy Thursday night Christ offered Himself alone. But now, on this Holy Thursday night, we offer ourselves through Christ and with Him and in Him. At the solemn moment of Consecration the heavenly Father takes Christ's Gift and ours and blesses them. Then the head of our parochial family, our priest, sings the meal prayer, the "Our Father," and God spreads "the Sacred Banquet wherein Christ is received; the memory of His Passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory is given unto us."

Night has fallen and the remains of our Sacred Banquet are solemnly carried in procession to the side altar, there to be praised and adored until midnight when the

joyful memory of the Lord's Supper gives place to the commemoration of His blessed Passion.

**Prayer:** *O God, who didst punish Judas for his betrayal and reward the good thief for his confession of faith, grant us the favor of Thy forgiveness and, as our Lord Jesus Christ dealt with each of these according to his deserts, so may He free us from our inherited blindness and fill our hearts with the grace of His resurrection, who lives with Thee forever. Amen.*



### **Good Friday**

(Station at Holy Cross in Jerusalem)

"Then He bowed His head and yielded up His spirit."

**T**ODAY, THE ONE and only Priest of the entire human race ascended the altar of the Cross and offered once and for all the only Sacrifice which atoned for man's outrage to the majesty of God and merited the reopening of the gates of heaven to man. In the presence of this real and bloody Sacrifice, Mother Church deems it unfitting to celebrate the sacramental and unbloody Sacrifice, holy Mass, on this day. By forbidding the celebration of holy Mass, she reminds us that her priests on earth are subordinate to the High Priest, Christ, and that the Sacrifice of the Mass depends on the Sacrifice of the Cross.

In loving memory of the three hours' agony of our Savior, the whole Christian family gathers this afternoon in the house of God. The altar is completely bare, and the clergy enter as if in mourning and lie prostrate before the altar. A feeling of desolation pervades all. In the midst of

it the lector reads the prophecy of Osee, that after two days there will be the resurrection. Next, we are reminded of the lamb that was slain and eaten by the Jews in Egypt; its blood, sprinkled on the door-post, was a sign to the angel of death to pass over (pascha) that house. This slaying of the lamb was a type and figure of what is narrated in St. John's story of the Passion.

Having listened to these instructions we now pray as a family, with the priest at our head, for the whole Christian family—both those who belong to it completely and those who are not full members—and for all our needs.

The prayers being concluded, Mother Church dramatically recalls the scene in Jerusalem at the hour when Christ paid the purchase price for His Mother's sinlessness and when the Church herself was born from His pierced side. "Behold the wood of the Cross on which hung the Savior of the world! Come, let us adore!" We approach devoutly to kiss the Sign of our salvation. Meanwhile the choir reproaches us with our ingratitude for all that Christ has done for us. "O my people, what have I done to thee? or wherein have I grieved thee? answer me."

Now the moment of climax has come. At the hour when Christ yielded up His Soul on the Cross, at that same hour the sacred Body and Blood of Christ is given to us in Holy Communion. Christ is at rest in us, His purchased people, and we are at rest, possessing Him.

**Prayer:** *O God, who didst punish Judas for his betrayal and reward the good thief for his confession of faith, grant us the favor of Thy forgiveness and, as our Lord Jesus Christ dealt with each of these according to his deserts, so may He free us from our inherited blindness and fill our hearts with the grace of His resurrection, who lives with Thee forever. Amen.*



## The Easter Vigil

(Station at St. John Lateran)

"Lumen Christi!"

**T**ONIGHT THE DIVINE Conqueror of sin and death lies at rest after His battle fought for us, and we, His disciples, are gathered to keep watch over Him. Suddenly, in the darkness, a light is struck and the light of holiness conquers the darkness of sin; human death is swallowed up in divine victory as Christ our Hero rises gloriously from the tomb. He is "the Beginning and the End; the Alpha and the Omega; all time belongs to Him and all eternity; to Him be glory and empire through all ages of eternity. Amen." The Easter Candle, symbol of the risen Christ, bearing the five "wounds" filled with grains of incense, goes before us into the church, and from its flame our own candles are lit with the new and blessed *Lumen Christi*.

When everyone is at his place in the church, the deacon chants the Song of Easter Praise, of this wonderful night which saw Christ arisen from the grave, crime banished, sin washed away, heaven wedded to earth, and the things of God wedded to the things of men.

After this exuberant outpouring of eloquent song, the catechumens are given their final instructions before approaching the font. They are reminded that God, not chance, created the world and man; that the Chosen People of God had to pass through the Red Sea; that Jerusalem, having been cleansed of sin, became the dwelling-place of God; and that God made a covenant with the Jews—if they would obey Him, He would be their God; if they did not obey Him, He would abandon them.

The instruction concluded, the Church asks all God's saints to intercede, for she is about to consecrate the waters of that font in which, as in a womb, new saints are born of God. From this water, made fertile by divine power (the Oil of Catechumens and Sacred Chrism), all men, regardless of their age or sex, come forth to new infancy, as children of God. Then, if anyone is ready for baptism, the miracle of his rebirth as a child of God will complete the joy of God's holy family. Meanwhile, all the rest of the members of God's family renew their baptismal promises to die to sin and to live a new life in Christ. Then they are sprinkled with Easter Water.

This entire period of keeping vigil and watching for Christ reaches its climax in the Sacrifice of holy Mass. The last traces of sadness and sorrow are cast aside as the *Gloria* of Easter rings out and "Alleluia" is heard again. Swiftly, as if it were the very night during which the angel of death was passing over the land, Christ our Pasch is sacrificed on the altar, and our souls are signed with His Blood in Holy Communion.

At early dawn on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb and found it empty. Christ, the Sun of Justice, has risen to illuminate the world and awaken every creature to a life of praise to the living and life-giving God. Thus Mother Church closes her celebration of the Easter Vigil with Lauds to God, for the dawn of the Day of Redemption has come at last.

**Prayer:** *O God, Thou didst illuminate this holy night with the glorious resurrection of our Lord; we beg Thee now to preserve in the newly-born members of Thy family the Spirit which Thou hast given them, so that, renewed in body and soul, they may render Thee faultless service. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## EASTER SUNDAY

(Station at St. Mary Major)

"Christ is risen, Alleluia!"

**T**HIS IS THE DAY which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice in it."

Christ, by assuming human nature, lifted the nature of the whole world (of men) to a divine Person. In taking our flesh and blood, Jesus united to Himself all mankind in a Mystical Body. Because of this union every act of Christ is also our act. The whole Christ acts.

When Christ died upon the cross on Good Friday, we members of His Mystical Body died with Him. "Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death?" Christ, by dying, destroyed sin and death in His Mystical Body, for the Mystical Body died to sin with Him.

Yesterday we saw original sin and personal sins buried forever in the baptismal waters. Souls came from the font with a new life, as Christ arose from His tomb with a new life today. We who share in all that He does, have risen forever to a new life through our baptism. As long as we remain in this earthbound body, that new life is the life of grace. But grace is "the seed of eternal glory." So when the Christian falls asleep in Christ, it will be but a very little while until Christ shall come and take him, body and soul, into His glory. The mystery of Redemption is constantly being accomplished in us who are members of the Risen Savior.

"This is the day which the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it." Dawn was purpling over the sky when the whole Christ burst the bonds of death and came victorious out of the grave. The heavens resounded with joy; the earth quaked, and hell groaned and wailed. Death, who had seemed to be conqueror at the time of original sin, lies crushed today under the feet of human nature. And our humanity rose from the tomb. Therefore, let us keep festival today, with the new, fresh, unleavened bread



of sincerity and truth. Let us rejoice and be glad, for we who were dead now live.

**Prayer:** *God, who, through Thy only-begotten Son, didst on this day conquer death and open the door to everlasting life for us, help us to accomplish the desires that Thy grace has inspired in our hearts. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Easter Monday**

(Station at St. Peter)

"They knew Him in the breaking of bread."

**T**HE FAMILY of God, with the newborn children wearing the white robes of their baptism, assemble around Peter, the father of the faithful, for the Eucharistic banquet. Theirs is the greatest joy, for the Lord has brought them into a land flowing with the milk of grace and the honey of charity. The food in this land is the Eucharist, which is spoken of as the "breaking of bread."

What joy must have filled the hearts of the Christians as they listened to the Prince of the Apostles telling of the glorious triumph of Christ. And their hearts also burned within them as they followed the two disciples to Emmaus and knew their Lord in the breaking of bread. With hearts so filled with divine love, is it any wonder that they spread the Christian faith so rapidly?

Let us rejoice and partake of the Eucharistic banquet today. With hearts filled with charity from above, let us go out to spread the Easter message—Christ has conquered! Christ reigns!

Christus vincit! Christus regnat! Christus—Christus imperat!

**Prayer:** *O God, Thou hast given the world healing remedies through the Easter solemnities; now, we pray Thee, continue to stay close to Thy people, so that they may attain to perfect freedom and make steady progress on the road to eternal life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## Easter Tuesday

(Station at St. Paul)

"Thus it behooved Christ to suffer."

**T**HE CHRISTIANS gather today at the tomb of the Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul. In the Lesson, our Apostle tells of the humiliation and of the glorious victory of Christ over sin and death. In the Gospel, Luke, who was Paul's secretary, tells us of the appearing of Christ to His disciples on Easter night.

Through our baptism, we Christians have died to this world with Christ, and we have risen to a new life in Him. Therefore we are not to seek after the things of this world, but are to look for the things that are above, the friendship of God, virtue, and the spread of His kingdom on earth.

This thought is best expressed in what is perhaps the most beautiful of all the Collects of the year, that of the fourth Sunday after Easter. In this prayer, we beg of God in words of almost homesick longing, that He should let us so love what He commands and desire what He promises that, amid the changing things of this world, our hearts may be set where true joys are to be found. God could grant us no better gift. This is a prayer for the whole of Eastertime, for the year round, for the whole of a Christian life.

**Prayer:** *O God, Thou dost give Thy Church constant increase by bringing new children to her bosom every day; deign also to grant them the grace to keep their lives in harmony with this sacrament that they have received by faith. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Easter Wednesday

(Station at St. Lawrence Outside the Walls)

"It is the Lord!"

**"C**OME YE BLESSED of My Father, receive the Kingdom, alleluia, which was prepared for you from the founda-

tion of the world." These are the words with which we are greeted as we enter the church today. This is the greeting of St. Lawrence to the newly-baptized who gathered so often around him while they were preparing for the reception of the great sacrament of their rebirth.

Christianity is an Easter religion; already in this life, we are living the life to come. We see God through a mirror and in a dark manner, by faith. We love Him as He loves Himself. We have received a share in the life of God Himself, and we are incorporated with Christ in the life of the Blessed Trinity. This is eternal life. At death, the only change that will take place will be the withdrawing of the veils of faith so that we may see God face to face. This has been beautifully expressed by the poet in these lines:

The life of grace and glory is the same;  
The life of grace is, by another name,  
Heaven on earth; and death is  
Just a change  
In range  
And nothing strange.

Realizing this, let us strive to advance ever in grace and virtue, living in blessed hope of the things to come.

**Prayer:** *O God, who dost give us joy every year in the solemn celebration of our Lord's resurrection, kindly grant us this favor: that, by means of the feasts we celebrate in this life, we may attain to everlasting joy hereafter. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### Easter Thursday

(Station at the Twelve Holy Apostles)

"I have seen the Lord; these things He said to me."

"GO TO MY BRETHREN and say to them that I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."

The apostles are the ones sent by God to bear witness of the Redemption wrought by Christ. This Redemption far surpasses all the prayers and hopes of mankind since the fall. By the death of Christ, we gained so much more than we had ever lost by sin that the Church sings, "O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer."

We Christians, who are children of the apostles, gather today around them, for they have been entrusted with the good news of salvation by God for all men. They spread the message. The sound of their voice was heard throughout the whole world. They became a "spectacle to men and angels."

As Mary Magdalen came and told them of Christ's Resurrection, and as Philip told the eunuch, so must we proclaim before all men the victory of the Savior. We, too, must bear witness to the Resurrection before an unbelieving world, by our lives more even than by our words.

For "the people whom God has purchased declare the power of Him who has called us out of darkness into His admirable light." We must never cease until we have brought all men to Christ's Father and our Father, to His God and our God; until the whole world is one fold under the care of this Good Shepherd.

**Prayer:** *O God, Thou hast made all peoples one in the recognition of Thy Name; deign also to unite in faith and charity those who have been reborn in baptism. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **Easter Friday**

(Station at St. Mary of the Martyrs)

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations."

**I**N THE 7TH CENTURY, the ancient Roman Pantheon, that is, the temple of all the gods, was dedicated as a Christian basilica to Mary and all the martyrs of the catacombs. This triumph of Christianity is but one proof of the con-

quering power of Christ. In the Gospel of today, Christ says, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." There is no power left for anyone else. This power Christ gave to His Church when He established it upon earth as supreme teacher, saying, "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Christ's Church is built upon living men, and not upon a written constitution. It is built upon the apostles and their successors in whom and through whom Christ operates through all ages, till the end. Is the Church strict in her laws? It is because Christ is strict. Is the Church set against false teaching? It is because Christ is set against false teaching. We must see the figure of Christ behind the Church, for the Church is the extension in time of the incarnate Christ.

Let us, like the faithful Mother who stood at the foot of the Cross, and like all the faithful witnesses, the martyrs, remain true to the faith and to the Church, even though it costs our life. Martyrs have a special right to the triumph of Easter, for they have shared the Cross with Christ.

**Prayer:** *Almighty, eternal God, Thou hast established the Easter mystery as a pledge of reconciliation with mankind; enrich our souls with grace, then, so that we may translate into action the lessons of this feast. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Easter Saturday**

(Station at St. John Lateran)

"You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood."

**T**ODAY THE NEWBORN Christians used to lay aside the white garments which they had received as they came

forth from the baptismal font on Holy Saturday night, which had symbolized the divine life of grace and innocence in their souls. However, they were warned, in the words of St. Augustine, "When you put off the white garment of the baptismal ceremony, keep its whiteness always in your heart."

In today's Gospel, we find Peter confirming his faith by witnessing the empty tomb. In the Lesson, we hear him urging the flock to lay aside all malice and to seek the rational milk, that is, seek reasons that feed faith. For reason is the handmaid of faith.

There are many ways to increase our knowledge of our faith. Perhaps the best way is to follow the teachings of the Mass of the Catechumens throughout the Church year. Certainly, the dogmatic teaching of each mystery is set forth as its feast rolls around; the Incarnation at Christmas; the Redemption at Easter; the birth of the Church at Pentecost; all these truths the Church teaches us in her own way through her feasts and their liturgy.

Like Mary, let us keep all these words, pondering them in our hearts. Today we keep the station at the home of the virgin Apostle into whose care Christ confided His Mother from His deathbed of the cross. We may be sure that Mary and John often spoke of the mysteries of which they had been such close witnesses and partakers. By keeping company with them, reading their words thoughtfully, praying in the spirit with which they remembered these mysteries and relived them, we will learn, and grow in grace, with them.

**Prayer:** *We beg Thee, almighty God, to make the feast of Easter, which we have just celebrated with due reverence, a means by which we shall attain to unending joys. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Low Sunday

(Station at St. Pancratius)

"Jesus said to them: Peace be to you."

**I**N TODAY'S GOSPEL the risen Christ appears a second time to His disciples, and this time St. Thomas is among them. Thomas, who had doubted, on seeing Christ and His wounds exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" The slowness of the disciples to believe in the Resurrection is a strong reason for us to believe in it; for their doubts produced many convincing proofs of the Resurrection, which is the foundation stone of our faith.

We believe. What do we believe? We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who assumed human nature and suffered death to make satisfaction for mankind. He took our place. We, by "putting on Christ" in baptism, are made members of His Mystical Body. Now, before the world, we take His place. Our faith is rooted in Jesus Christ. "And there are three who give testimony in heaven: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three are one." What else is the Spirit and the water and the blood but martyrdom? Pancratius, in whose church we keep the station today, died for the faith at the early age of fourteen.

Christian life is a martyrdom; a constant struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. But it wins for us a reward exceeding great for the life to come—intimate communion with the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, to whom be all glory and honor forever and ever.

**Prayer:** *We beseech Thee, almighty God, give us the grace to keep our lives in harmony with the Easter mystery, whose celebration we have now completed. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*







